DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 390 829 SP 036 392

AUTHOR	Bell, Martie; And Others
TITLE	Recruitment into Teaching: An Intergenerational Analysis.
PUB DATE	Apr 95
NOTE	22p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Career Choice; *Career Planning; Decision Making; Elementary Education; Higher Education; Interviews; Physical Education; *Physical Education Teachers; Socialization; Student Teachers; *Teacher Background; *Teacher Recruitment; Teacher Role; Teaching Experience
IDENTIFIERS	*Life History Method

ABSTRACT

This study investigated differences in recruitment patterns between veteran and student physical education teachers. Five veteran and five student teachers were interviewed with interview questions based upon previous socialization research. Questions were aimed at discovering the subjects' physical activity participation background, education experiences, reasons for choosing a teaching career, and their career goals. A life-history approach allowed the investigators to link contextual life experiences with occupational aspirations and motives. Interview transcripts were analyzed using the constant comparative method. Four themes emerged that distinguished the recruitment patterns of the novice and veteran teachers: (1) background experiences, (2) personal qualities, (3) career goals, and (4) significant others. New recruits tended to see coaching rather than teaching as their primary career goal, tended to have experienced a greater variety of sports, and credited their previous coaching experiences as most influential in career choice. Reasons given by students today for selecting a career in physical education teaching are not what they were a generation ago. (Contains 37 references.) (Author/DB)

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ED 390 829

Recruitment into Teaching:

An Intergenerational Analysis

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Abstract

This study investigated differences in recruitment patterns between veteran and student physical education teachers. Five veteran and five student teachers volunteered to be interviewed for this study. The interview questions were based upon previous socialization research (Dodds, et al., 1992; Schempp, 1989; Templin, et al, 1982) and were aimed at discovering the subjects' physical activity participation background, educational experiences, reasons for choosing a teaching career, and their career goals. A life-history approach (Sparkes & Templin, 1992) allowed the investigators to link contextual life experiences with occupational aspirations and motives. Interview transcripts were analyzed using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Four themes emerged that distinguished the recruitment patterns of the novice and veteran teachers: (a) background experiences, (b) personal qualities, (c) career goals, and (d) significant others. It was concluded, therefore, that recruitment patterns change with time and circumstance. The reasons for selecting a career in physical education teaching are not what they were a generation ago.

Recruitment into Teaching:

An Intergenerational Analysis

Tomorrow's teachers can be found on the doorsteps of teacher education programs today. Understanding the trail of experiences and personal proclivities that lead one into teaching can reveal much about teachers and their professional decisions. It may also hold critical insights into how to better recruit and prepare teachers. This information can provide a sound foundation for developing meaningful programs that address the needs and interests of the recruits. Experiences, knowledge, orientations, and aspirations of recruits may, however, change over time. Those who enter teaching today may not do so for the same reasons as those who currently comprise the contemporary teaching corps.

Numerous studies have clearly indicated that teachers begin formulating practices, expectations, and aspirations while they are still students themselves (Dewar, 1983; Hutchinson, 1993; Lortie, 1975; Schempp, 1989). As students consider careers as teachers, they weigh their perceptions of occupational requirements and rewards against their personal qualities, convictions, and expectations (Lawson, 1983, 1991). This weighing of perceptions of self and profession is a critical first step: critical for the recruit and profession alike. It is during this time that the futures of both the individual and profession are cast.

Previous studies have sought to identify the factors underlying the rationale for selecting a career in teaching. These cohesive and collected factors are often referred to as a recruitment pattern (Dewar, 1983; Lawson, 1983). Pooley (1972) offered the first theoretical framework for explaining physical education teacher recruitment when he developed the Model of Professional

Socialization. In the pretraining phase of this model, he included three variables affecting recruitment: (1) personal characteristics; (2) socialization settings; and (3) socialization agents.

Beliefs, backgrounds, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic status comprised the variables of personal characteristics in Pooley's (1972) model. Several studies have supported these characteristics as critical components of the pattern of teacher recruitment (Hutchinson, 1993; Kagan, 1992; Weinstein, 1988; Zeichner & Gore, 1990). It appears that people who have a preconceived image of themselves as teachers (Hutchinson,1993), a strong desire to be of service and helpful to others (Templin, 1979a; Mulling, 1981), and have confidence in their abilities to handle the daily problems of teaching (Kagan, 1992; Weinstein, 1988; Zeichner & Gore, 1990) are likely to choose teaching as a profession. An early socialization into sports with a heavy participation in various activities also appears as a dominant quality in teacher recruits (Dewar, 1983; Templin, Woodford, & Mulling, 1982; Templin, 1979b; Pooley, 1975). The profession also seems to attract proportionately more white, middle-class males than those from coming from another race, class, or gender (Doolittle, Placek, Dodds, Ratliffe, Portman, & Pinkham, 1993).

Socialization settings common in teacher recruitment pattern include family make-up, school, and community (Pooley, 1972). Recruits usually came from families where the parents were likely to be of the working or lower-middle class, did not have college degrees, and held conservative perspectives about education (Hutchinson, 1990). Like the recruits themselves, parents and siblings tended to be actively involved in sports (Dodds, et. al, 1992). Most recruits attended public high schools located in suburban areas, usually graduated in the top half of their

class, and were active in the school and community (Dodds, et al., 1992; Templin et al., 1982). The majority of recruits also engaged in some form of coaching or teaching during their secondary school years (Templin, 1978; Woodford, 1977).

Peers, teachers, coaches and family members, referred to as socialization agents in Pooley's (1972) model, are the final pieces of the teacher recruitment pattern. Previous studies validated Pooley's perception of these factors as significant components in the recruits' occupational choice (Lawson, 1983; Pooley, 1972; Steen, 1985; Templin et al., 1982). Through sports involvement, and support and encouragement, family members and peers were particularly influential in the recruits' career choice (Dodds et al., 1992).

Are the reasons and motives for selecting a career in teaching different today than a generation ago? Have the factors influencing the career choice of physical education teachers remained constant or has it changed over time? Understanding differences between those in the profession and those about to enter is useful for identifying the motives for teaching, monitoring changes in accepted practices, and recognizing the stability of pedagogical aspirations of teachers. If society has changed in the 20 plus years since Pooley (1972) formulated his theory, how have those changes affected physical education teachers? In what ways are the new corps of teachers different from those whom they will replace? Ultimately, the answer to this question provides a clue as to the future of public school physical education. The purpose of this study was, therefore, to investigate whether there are differences in recruitment patterns between veteran and novice physical education teachers.

Methods

Teachers

Five veteran and five student teachers volunteered to participate in this study. The veteran teachers (4 females and 1 male) ranged between 7 and 26 years of teaching experience (M=15 years) and were current public school physical education teachers. They were selected from a list of possible participants based upon a recommendation as a competent teacher by a peer or university faculty, accessibility to the investigators, and an expressed willingness to participate in the study. The student teachers (3 females and 2 males) were within one quarter from graduation and teacher certification in physical education. While the student teachers and investigators all came from the same institution, there had been no previous contact between the student teachers and investigators. Informed consent was obtained from the teachers prior to data collection.

Data Collection

Interviews provided the primary data for this study. Interview questions were based upon previous recruitment studies (Dodds, et al., 1992, Schempp, 1989; Templin, et al, 1982) and Grossman's (1990) research on teacher development. The interview was structured to discover the teachers' recruitment patterns, i.e., physical activity participation background, educational experiences, reasons for choosing a teaching career, and career goals (Pooley, 1972). The interview protocol and questions were pilot tested to assess the veracity of the responses for addressing the concerns of this study. The pilot interviews were videotaped and reviewed by the investigators to insure protocol consistency. The teachers were then interviewed individually

and in private by two investigators. A one hour interview with each teacher proved sufficient to data gathering.

A life-history approach (Goodson, 1980, 1992; Sparkes & Templin, 1992) allowed the investigators to link contextual life experiences with occupational aspirations and motives. Using this method of research, subjects were asked to describe and elaborate upon different times in their lives. In doing so, teachers recalled events and persons they deemed important in making their career choice.

Data Analysis

The interviews were audiorecorded and then transcribed by the investigators. A total of 10 interviews (1 interview X 10 subjects) were completed and transcribed. The transcripts were then analyzed using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). There were several steps required in using this form of analysis. First, the transcribed data were read three times. In the course of these reviews, subjects' key works and phrases were identified and listed. The lists from the 10 interviews were then compared for recurrent "underlying uniformities" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 10). From these comparisons, categories and themes were developed that highlighted and summarized the recruitment pattern similarities and differences between the veteran and student teachers.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate differences in recruitment patterns between veteran and student physical education teachers. The findings of this study are, therefore, presented in the context of commonalities and contrasts in the factors affecting the recruitment

patterns of the two groups. Four themes emerged from the stories teachers told regarding their career selection: (a) background experiences, (b) personal qualities, (c) career goals, and (d) significant others.

Background Experiences

Physical education teachers, veterans and newcomers alike, seem to share a common trait: their childhood was characterized by successful, vigorous, and enthusiastic sport participation. All the teachers reported being involved in physical activities, beginning as young children and continuing through their school years. This came as no surprise, as previous studies have, with uniform consistency, found the same factor as a strong career influence for physical education teachers (Dewar, 1983; Doolittle et al., 1992; Pooley; 1975; Templin et al., 1982).

Differences between veteran and student teachers begin to emerge upon a closer examination of the nature and constitution of the sport experiences. Reflecting a change in youth sport opportunities, the veteran teachers reported far fewer opportunities for sport participation in comparison to the student teachers. Again, reflective of the changing times, the veteran female teachers, in particular, had significantly fewer participation opportunities due to limited offerings in school and recreational programs. They, therefore, focused primarily on one activity. Their involvement mainly occurred in recreational programs through the teen years, and then they participated in collegiate competition. One of the veteran teachers reported that she attended a catholic school that did not offer any physical education or sport programs. Recreation programs were the only avenue by which she could pursue her love of sport. While the male veteran

teacher was able to participate in high school competition, he was limited to the few sport activities available in his small town (i.e., football, basketball, baseball).

The student teachers (both female and male), on the other hand, were involved in a far greater variety of sports and had more competitive opportunities within each of their selected sports. Their physical activities included: gymnastics, swimming, tennis, softball, volleyball, track, football, and baseball. One participant reported that she had always been active; that during her elementary, middle and high school years, she played softball, basketball, volleyball, track . . . . "you name it, I did it."

Perhaps indicative of the recent growth of youth sports in the United States, the opportunity to coach stood as another difference between the two groups. None of our veteran teachers reported coaching before entering the teaching profession. Whereas, the student teachers reported multiple opportunities to coach before and during their professional training. While in high school, four of the five student teachers coached recreational sports teams and two coached more than one sport. One student teacher also was employed as an umpire and referee. Woodford (1977) and Templin (1978) both found that most recruits had the opportunity to coach in community sports. Our findings revealed that this held true only for the new teachers.

Personal Qualities

The teachers believed they possessed certain strengths and qualities leading them to the teaching profession. An enjoyment and love of working with children was a common quality shared by these teachers. They believed themselves to have the ability to develop children's interest in activities and to be good role models. The striking difference between the two groups

was found in their perceptions of personal qualities the led them to choose teaching as a profession. The veteran perceived themselves to have the ability and commitment necessary to teach. Novice teachers, however, believed it was their competence and involvement in sport that made them suited for teaching.

The veteran teachers recalled a deep desire and calling to be a teacher. They confessed a strong commitment to become a teacher -- a commitment which began when they were children. A veteran teacher of 15 years, who loved physical education and wanted to teach, was so committed to his goal that he had to go against his parents' wishes of majoring in business, which resulted in his loosing financial support for college. His commitment to teaching was so strong that he supported himself while finishing his degree, and later went on to complete a Ph.D.

In contrast, the student teachers identified skills in athletics or coaching as occupational assets. Several expressed an interest in continuing their personal involvement in sports and saw teaching as a way of building upon and perpetuating their sport contact. One student teacher admitted that it was his interest in sports that brought a career in physical education to his attention: "I thought that physical education would be right down my alley since I like sports so much." Another student teacher was looking for a career that she thought would be fun "and would find enjoyment in going to work each day . . . . coaching and involvement in sports would be something I could look forward going to work more than other things".

Career Goals

As was found in previous studies, the teachers--veterans and newcomers alike--viewed a career in physical education as an opportunity for a physically active occupation (Dodds et al.,

1991; Belka et al., 1991; Mulling, 1981; Templin, 1979b; Woodford, 1977; Pooley, 1975). The teachers in this study choose to a career in physical education because they aspired to remain active and couldn't imagine being in a profession where they were not able to use their physical skills. Differences in career goals between new and veteran teachers manifested in their views of the job market and their perceptions of the work of physical education teachers.

The veteran teachers identified the plentiful job market as an attractor to teaching. They recalled a time when girls and boys were taught separately, so more teachers were needed. One teacher remembered plentiful jobs for women because physical education was gender segregated the first four years that she taught. This teacher also entered the profession at a time when "teachers would resign when they got pregnant. . . so there were jobs. I bet I could have had 15 different jobs." It appears a very different story today as only one student teacher mentioned a potential job prospect. The other student teachers were not, at the time of this study, actively seeking a teaching position although they were soon to be available for employment. They were not optimistic that many opportunities existed for them.

Defining their professional role, the veteran teachers saw themselves first and foremost as teachers. They reported that they coached only because it was required. One veteran teacher referred to coaching as a requirement to all p.e. teaching positions. "I always tell people that are interested in the field, if you get into the field, almost always you're going to be strapped with a coaching job . . ." He coached until he got tenure and then resigned his duties because "I didn't want to coach anymore."

In contrast, the primary career goal for the majority of the student teachers was to achieve a coaching position. Teaching was merely a necessary avenue for reaching their occupational objective: coaching a sport team. As one student teacher put it: "That was my career goal: to coach gymnastics, and a good way to get that is to get a p.e. background. That way I could be a teacher if I couldn't get a coaching job somewhere."

Significant Others

Nine of the teacher reported that their parents, siblings, or friends were involved in sports. Further, these individuals influenced and supported the teachers' career decision. While much remains the same in the role significant others play in the recruitment patterns of physical education teachers, on distinctive difference was found: veteran teachers identified and described a mentor as influential in making their career decision. Four of the veteran teachers identified either a coach, teacher or colleague as serving this mentor role. More than assisting in a career decision, these mentors were identified as helping shape the veteran teachers' philosophies, policies, and practices. One veteran teacher credited becoming a physical education teacher to her high school physical education teacher "She was an older woman, gray headed, in her 50s. I liked the interactions she had with her students and the way she treated them. Whenever anybody asks me which teacher I most admire, I always think of her."

Given the powerful influence mentors had for our veteran teachers, it was surprising to find that none of the student teachers identified a significant other as directly influencing their decision to enter the teaching profession. This was surprising, as previous studies (Dodd et al., 1991; Pooley, 1972) have shown that the coach/teacher mentoring was more significant than that

of family and peers. One teacher mentioned he had role models in high school, but did not identify anyone in particular. For the new generation of physical education teachers, the influence from family and friends was more powerful than a respected mentor.

Discussion

This study identifies differences in recruitment patterns between veteran teachers and a new generation of teachers. By recognizing these differences, this study has important implications for teacher educators and other responsible for teacher recruitment and development. New teachers, for example appear to no longer be fully committed to a teaching career. Rather, these future teachers see coaching as a prime career goal. They are also more flexible in their career options. Working in health clubs, private organizations, and recreational venues appear viable career options that were not considered by previous generations of teachers.

New recruits also have a much more broader range of experience with different physical activities that reflect different attitudes toward sport and physical activity. Sports participation has been found to be a consistent characteristic among recruits, but there are two changes found in the opportunities of the two groups. First is the opportunity of a variety of sports participation. The veteran teachers had a limited choice in their sports selection and tended to participate in just one sport, whereas the student teachers had a greater variety of sport participation experience. Because the veteran teachers may not have experienced many activities, their ability to draw on their background knowledge for teaching and curricular planning may be limited. However, their specialization in one or two sports would suggest that

what they do know, they know well. The socialization of student teachers suggests that they are not as specialized in a sport, but have a greater range of experiences in a variety of activities.

The findings of this study relative to background experiences also suggest implications for the work orientations of the two groups. The veteran teachers, not having the opportunity to coach prior to their teacher education program, entered such programs lacking influential professional experiences. The student teachers, all of whom had coached in some capacity, referred to these experiences as influential, not only in career selection, but in the assessment of the information presented in their teacher education program. Teacher educators should consider this experience when planning the curriculum of future recruits.

The teachers' beliefs that their strengths and qualities suited them to a career in teaching physical education remained consistent with previous findings (Hutchinson, 1993; Kagan, 1992; Belka, Lawson, & Lipnicky, 1991; Lawson, 1991c; Zeichner & Gore, 1990; Weinstein, 1988). Also consistent with previous findings is the student teachers' interest in continuing their sports involvement (Dodds et al., 1991; Belka et al., 1991; Mulling, 1981; Templin, 1979b; Woodford, 1977; Pooley, 1975). A striking change appears to have occurred in the teachers' perceptions of the personal qualities that suit them to the profession. The veteran teachers expressed a strong desire and deep commitment to teaching, while the new corps of teachers came because of their love, not for teaching, but for sport. We do not know if they will ever be as committed as our current veteran teachers, or whether their professional longevity may be ultimately affected.

Consistent with their strong committment to teaching, veteran teachers held teaching as their major career of objective. Student teachers, however, saw teaching as simply a rite of

passage toward another career objective: athletic team coaching. The student teachers' desire to coach more than teach has been well documented (Sage, 1989, 1980; Chu, 1984; Bain & Wendt, 1983; Segrave, 1981). The change in career goal was in the veteran teachers' desire to teach as compared to the student teachers' desire to coach. The veteran teachers viewed themselves as teachers first and viewed coaching as a requirement for the job. The student teachers sought to be coaches first and viewed teaching as an avenue to reach that goal. This finding suggests that those currently entering the teaching force, do so only as a path to another goal. Teaching as a primary job, but of secondary concern does not bode well for the future quality students will receive in the physical education programs of public schools.

The influence of teachers and coaches has been found to be an important factor for the recruitment of students into physical education (Templin, 1979; Woodford, 1977; Pooley, 1970). The teacher or coach is the role model that the student identifies with during the their apprenticeship period (Schempp, 1989, Templin, 1978). The student teachers in our study did not identify a significant coach or teacher that led them to choose teaching as their career. During their youth, the student teachers participated in more sports activities and therefore had more coaches and teachers. Instead of just having one significant coach or teacher that influenced their choice and with whom they identified, they may have had several coaches and teachers that significantly influenced them. If this is so, then new recruits may come to teacher education programs with influences from several significant individuals and several teaching styles that they aspire to model. This influence from several sources may help our teacher

education programs, as it may enable the preservice students to be more opened to learning different teaching philosophies and method.

By examining the differences in the recruitment patterns of veteran an preservice teachers, we are able to identify the changes that have taken place in the way the new generation define themselves. This study extends the body of knowledge in teacher socialization. In particular, it identifies intergenerational differences that may be attributable to the changes in time and cultural circumstances. Preservice and inservice teacher education programs need to be sensitive to these shifting motives, perspectives, and goals teachers hold regarding their careers in order to meet the expectations of teachers and prepare and sustain them in their professional careers.

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